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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: PRESIDENT MUSEVENI SPEAKS ON AFRICAN
INTEGRATION AT THE WAR COLLEGE

1. SUMMARY: President Yoweri Museveni, guest lecturer at the Nigerian National War College on September 17, was billed to speak to the filled hall about regional integration. His well-received speech focused largely on globalization as the driving force for integration. Museveni argued that states and supranational structures of significantly large population groups would give Africa the might necessary to demand trade rights and access to global markets. However, he warned, Africa must eschew religious, ethnic and tribal conflicts that prevent integration and economic development. END SUMMARY.

2. President Yoweri Museveni, accompanied on the dais by Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Chief of Defense Staff Ibrahim Ogohi, Chief of Naval Staff Afolayan, Chief of Air Staff Wuyep, Senator Udo Udoma and the NWC Commandant Rear Admiral HL Okpanachi, gave the inauguration lecture for Course 10 at the Nigerian National War College on September 17. Course 10 includes students from Benin, Burkina-Faso, Niger, Togo, and for the first time, Uganda and France.

3. While integration was the main point of Museveni's paper, dubbed "Why Uganda? Why Nigeria? Why the African Union?", he identified globalization as the impetus for integration (the speech sounded remarkably similar to many recent Thomas Friedman columns). First, Museveni launched into an anthropological discussion of the value-added of larger political units; states versus tribes. (Museveni must have also recently read Jared Diamond's book, "Guns, Germs and Steel"). He discussed the transition of humanity from hunter-gatherers to static agricultural-based societies. Museveni argued that these societies had to organize to irrigate and therefore developed larger social structures. He then asked why development of more complex structures had escaped Africa? Africa's low population levels due to disease and the high availability of "gatherable" resources made it unnecessary for Africans to develop structures more complex than tribes.

4. Museveni argued the consolidation of tribes into states by colonial powers was largely positive and noted that those African leaders who challenged this process were doomed to failure by the march of history. Implying that tribal structures were outdated and unhelpful for development, he joked, "I have a problem with my Kings in Uganda. They wear feathers and kingly attire, but," he emphasized, "they were conquered. 'Your Majesty, where were you? I was not a chief then?," he asked rhetorically.

5. Rejecting the claims of African apologists railing against the history of colonialism and the dissolution of tribal structures, Museveni opined that Africa must organize larger structures ("at a supra-tribal level") to survive. Comparing Uganda to China, and noting that in the last 10 years he had become a favorite of the World Bank because 2,300 new companies had invested in Uganda, Museveni pointed out that in the same period, 300,000 new companies had invested in China. Why, he asked? Because China has two billion people, he argued, and companies seek markets. While Uganda could not compete alone (it was too small), and individual tribes even less so, larger African groupings could and should compete on the world stage. Provided the chauvinisms of tribe and religion were resolved, he explained, the 750 million people in the African Union would have much stronger diplomatic and economic bargaining power (collectively more than the sum of their individual parts). Museveni laughed as he noted that he, as a Head of State, regularly had to go begging for South Africa's support whenever he made an international effort because Uganda was simply too small to go it alone.

6. Turning to resources and value-added products, Museveni recounted that tobacco growers in the West Nile area had demanded part of the revenue from taxes on cigarette sales since they grew the crops. He explained to the growers that they would not get additional revenue; the consumers buying the cigarettes were the real source of the wealth. Comparing this to Nigeria's oil revenue allocation debate and arguing that the wrong topic was being debated, Museveni emphasized

that oil was not the wealth of Nigeria, but its large population. Nigeria's strength was its human capital and its 120m strong market, provided that people received education and had enough individual wealth to be consumers. For success in development, he stated, one needs three things: educated people, fresh water, and arable land. Dismissing the importance of oil, he proclaimed, "Agriculture is the everlasting petroleum."

17. However, as long as Africans fell victim to inter-religious and inter-communal conflicts, Africa would not develop as an integrated unit, Museveni emphasized. Africa must avoid the kinds of conflict seen in the Middle East, Museveni argued. What do you care if someone else eats pork, or is from a different tribe -- what you should care about is whether he will buy what you are selling. But instead of talking about trade and access to markets, Museveni lamented, Africans are talking about pork. Emphasizing his point, Museveni said he had become the first Christian in his family in 1947. However, he flatly stated that at the Durban conference on racism, he had declared that he was considering returning to his local tribe's religion, because, "back at my home, we never cared what anyone else ate."

18. COMMENT: Somewhat light in its delivery, Museveni's speech, containing many nuggets for his Nigerian audience was well-received. Nigerian dependence on oil puts the country at economic risk should shocks occur in world petroleum prices. Privatization and diversification into non-oil sectors have been central tenets of the Obasanjo Administration, but globalization and privatization have been viewed as strictures imposed by the International Financial Institutions and Western states. Another African leader carries more credibility than Western leaders in Nigeria when discussing the benefits of free markets. More importantly, Museveni's strong statements against inter-communal and inter-religious conflict are sorely needed here, as events of the past few years in Kaduna, Jos, Lagos and elsewhere have clearly and sanguinely demonstrated.

Jeter